

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY PANAMA NIACT IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 126013

FOR R. PASTOR

FOLLOWING REPEAT SANTO DOMINGO 2642 ACTION SECSTATE INFO
PORT AU PRINCE USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS CZ MAY 17.

QUOTE: C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTO DOMINGO 2642

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, DR

SUBJECT: MILITARY INTERVENTION IN ELECTORAL PROCESS: SITUATION
REPORT

SITREP AS OF 6PM LOCAL, MAY 17

1. WITH INTERVENTION OF ARMED FORCES IN CENTRAL ELECTORAL BOARD (JCE) WHILE THEY DENY THAT COUP HAS TAKEN PLACE, DOM REP WAITS EXPECTANTLY FOR SOME RESOLUTION OF CURRENT CRISIS, OUTLINES OF WHICH ARE NOW NOWHERE APPARENT. MUCH ATTENTION IS FOCUSED ON COMPETING CLAIMS BY PRO-BALAGUER CIVILIANS AND MILITARY AND BY PRD THAT EACH HAS WON THE ELECTIONS. PRESIDENT BALAGUER HAS YET TO MAKE ANY PUBLIC STATEMENT; INDEED ONLY GOVERNMENT STATEMENT IN 24 HOURS SINCE ELECTORAL INTERVENTION WAS ARMED FORCES' BULLETIN OF THIS MORNING. MEANWHILE TOP LEADERS HAVE APPARENTLY BEEN MEETING
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CONTINUOUSLY.

2. LOCAL PRESS REPORTED THAT WHEN JCE CLOSED SOME 25 PERCENT OF VOTES HAD BEEN COUNTED AND PRD LED REFORMIST PARTY (PR) 326,000 TO 218,000 VOTES. JCE, HOWEVER, WAS EXTREMELY SLOW SOURCE OF RESULTS THROUGH LONG EVENING HOURS, LIMITING ITSELF TO READY ONE BY ONE RESULTS FROM 5,500 POLLING PLACES. NEVERTHELESS THESE READINGS

IN ALMOST EVERY CASE SHOWED PRD WITH AMPLE LEAD WHICH IT APPEARED TO MAINTAIN UNTIL HALT OF BROADCAST RESULTS AT 4AM.

3. PRD AND PR SOURCES HAD MUCH MORE COMPLETE RESULTS. PRD NOW SAYS PUBLICLY IT WON ELECTIONS BY REPORTS OF ITS OWN DELEGATES BY 1.2 MILLION VOTES TO 600,000. PR SOURCE LOCATED AT PARTY ELECTION CENTER SAYS CONFIDENTIALLY THAT BY 3:00 AM TODAY PARTY'S OWN TALLIES SHOWED THAT WITH ABOUT ONE MILLION VOTES COUNTED, PRD LED BY SOME 180,000 VOTES. SAME SOURCE REPORTS THAT WHEN PARTY LEADERS AT ELECTION CENTER DETERMINED PRD WOULD WIN, ORDER WENT OUT TO PARTY OFFICES THROUGHOUT COUNTRY TO DO WHATEVER WAS REQUIRED TO ALTER THE RESULTS AT LOCAL ELECTORAL BOARDS.

4. EMBASSY HAS HEARD IN COURSE OF DAY THAT WITHIN REFORMISTA RANKS, RUMOR SPREAD THAT STRONG PRD LEAD BEING ANNOUNCED OVER RADIO AND TV WAS DUE TO PRD-SPONSORED FRAUD AND THAT JCE ITSELF WAS RESPONSIBLE. THIS RUMOR FED BY FACT THAT DURING EARLY VOTING HOURS CONSIDERABLE CONFUSION DEVELOPED WHEN IT BECAME KNOWN THAT LARGE NUMBERS OF DULY REGISTERED VOTERS FOUND THEIR NAMES MISSING FROM COMPUTERIZED VOTE LISTS SUPPLIED BY JCE TO EACH POLLING PLACE. JCE IMPROVISED BY ANNOUNCING THAT VOTERS COULD VOTE EVEN IF NAME DID NOT APPEAR ON LIST, BUT EMBASSY OFFICERS OBSERVED THAT CONFUSION REIGNED AT MANY POLLING PLACES BECAUSE OF JCE COMPUTER SLIPUP. IN MANY POLLING PLACES MILITARY INTERVENED TO BREAK UP HEATED DISPUTES OVER RIGHT OF INDIVIDUALS TO VOTE. THIS RUMOR, OF COURSE, MAY BE EX POST FACTO AND SELF-SERVING REASONAL-CONFIDENTIAL

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ZATION OF PRESENT STATE OF AFFAIRS.

5. WITH NO WAY TO TELL WHAT ACTUAL RESULTS WERE, PROGOVERNMENT ELEMENTS BEGAN CAMPAIGN TO DEMONSTRATE THAT BALAGUER HAD WON REELECTION. MILITARY AND POLICE PUT ON VICTORY DEMONSTRATIONS IN SEVERAL LOCATIONS. ALSO, SENIOR OFFICER WENT AROUND TO NEWSPAPERS TO CONVINCE THEM TO PUBLISH STORY THAT BALAGUER HAD WON ELECTION BY MARGIN OF 200,000 VOTES. WE ARE TOLD BY FAIRLY RELIABLE SOURCE THAT PRESIDENT BALAGUER HIMSELF HAD BEEN TOLD BY HIS ADVISORS THAT HE HAD WON BY A SIMILAR MARGIN, BUT PRESIDENT ASKED FOR RESULTS AS DECLARED BY JCE WHICH ARE NOT NOR ARE LIKELY TO BECOME AVAILABLE.

6. THE JCE HAS COMPLETELY CEASED TO FUNCTION, NATIONWIDE. JCE OFFICES ARE EMPTY AND CONTROLLED BY TROOPS. JCE NATIONAL CHAIRMAN MANUEL JOAQUIN CASTILLO, MAN TECHNICALLY IN CHARGE OF ENTIRE ELECTORAL PROCESS, WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO REACH. HIS HOME WAS DESERTED. ONE SOURCE REPORTED THAT MILITARY IS LOOKING FOR CASTILLO TO HAVE HIM OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCE BALAGUER VICTORY. EMBOFF IN SANTIAGO REPORTED ELECTORAL BOARD CHAIRMAN THERE WAS UNDER DETENTION BY MILITARY WHO SOUGHT TO FORCE HIM TO OFFICIALIZE ALTERED POLLING RESULTS IN COUNTRY'S SECOND LARGEST

CITY. HE WAS LATER RELEASED BUT WENT INTO HIDING.

7. COMMENT. THERE APPEARS TO BE CONCERN BY MILITARY THAT THEIR ACTION NOT BE CONSTRUED AS A COUP D'ETAT BUT AS AN INTERVENTION TO GUARANTEE PUBLIC ORDER. THEY APPEAR TO BE MAKING FRANTIC EFFORTS TO LEGITIMIZE MOVE THROUGH ISUTANCE OF ELECTION RESULTS FAVORABLE TO BALAGUER. AT THIS POINT FEW HERE WOULD FIND ANNOUNCEMENT OF PR VICTORY CREDIBLE. M
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